

# Article Alert

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## About the IRC

The U.S. Embassy's Information Resource Center (IRC) in Jakarta is a specialized Reference and Research Library. Its goal is to provide accurate, up-to-date information to the public about topics such as US. foreign policy, legislation, social issues, economics and trade. High speed Internet computers, printer and photo copier are provided at the IRC for library users.

Books, articles, and websites described in the Article Alert present a diversity of views in order to keep our IRC users abreast of current issues in the United States. These items represent the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessary reflect official U.S. Government policy.

Copies of the articles listed in IRC's Article Alert are available from the Information Resource Center, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Jakarta. Should you wish to receive a photocopy of an article, please complete the ARTICLE ALERT REQUEST FORM (page 4) and return it to us. We will mail or fax the requested articles directly to you at no cost.

## Change has come to America: Change.gov



President-Elect Barack Obama delivered the final speech of a presidential campaign that promised change in Washington. Now the work begins to deliver on this promise by planning the agenda and priorities for the Obama Administration. As the President-Elect reminded the country:

*What began 21 months ago in the depths of winter cannot end on this autumn night. This victory alone is not the change we seek. It is only the chance for us to make that change. And that cannot happen if we go back to the way things were. It can't happen without you, without a new spirit of service, a new spirit of sacrifice. So let us summon a new spirit of patriotism, of responsibility, where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves but each other.*

**Change.gov** provides resources to better understand the transition process and the decisions being made as part of it. It also offers an opportunity to be heard about the challenges our country faces and your ideas for tackling them. The Obama Administration will reflect an essential lesson from the success of the Obama campaign: that people united around a common purpose can achieve great things. President-Elect Obama reminded the country of our limitless potential when he claimed this victory:

*If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer.*

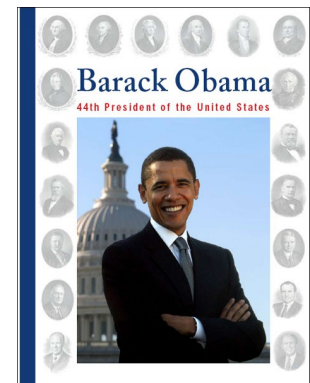
## Barack Obama: 44th President of the United States

*"I'm asking you to believe. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington...I'm asking you to believe in yours."*

Barack Obama, elected the 44th President of the United States, has lived a truly American life, and has opened a new chapter in American politics. This publication tells the story of Obama's life, describes how he captured the presidency,

and portrays his vision for the future. It also introduces readers to the Obama family and to the new Vice President, Joseph Biden.

This e-book is available online at: <http://www.america.gov/publications/books.html> or please see page 4 for print edition.



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## POST U.S. ELECTIONS 2008

### 1. BARACK OBAMA'S VICTORY SPEECH

On November 4, Americans elected Illinois Senator Barack Obama as 44th president of the United States. At the end of a very long Election Day, he addressed supporters at a park in Chicago Illinois on election night.

### 2. JOHN MC CAIN'S CONSESSION SPEECH

Senator John Mc Chain, the defeated Republican nominee, called on Americans to Unite behind an Obama presidency in an address to supporters in Phoenix Arizona

### 3. ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE:

BARACK OBAMA  
([www.America.gov](http://www.America.gov))

Democratic candidate focuses on wooing battleground states' voters. In the time remaining until Election Day, Democrat Barack Obama is campaigning across the country, especially eager to win support from those in key battleground states. Here is a summary of recent campaign activities from September 27–November 3, 2008

### 4. HIGH MARKS FOR THE CAMPAIGN, HIGH BAR FOR OBAMA ( Online Pew Research Center)


A week after the election, voters are feeling good about

themselves, the presidential campaign and Barack Obama. Looking ahead, they have high expectations for the Obama administration, with two-thirds predicting that he will have a successful first term.

### 5. YOUNG VOTERS COUNT ( Online Pew Research Center)

They weren't crucial to his election, but this year, 66% of those under age 30 voted for Barack Obama making the disparity between young voters and other age groups larger than in any presidential election since exit polling began in 1972. Obama making the disparity between young voters and other age groups larger than in any

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**2008-2009 Presidential Transition Resources**

The Transition Directory was developed to introduce Presidential nominees, appointees, and members of the President-elect's Transition Team to the operation of the Federal government and to the resources available to help them begin their service in the new Administration.

Source:  
<http://directory.presidentialtransition.gov/>

## ECONOMIC SECURITY

### 6. Pollan, Michael THE FOOD ISSUE: FARMER IN CHIEF (New York Times Magazine. October 12, 2008. p. 62 (11 pages)

Food policy is not something American presidents have had to give much thought to, at least since the Nixon administration—the last time high food prices presented a serious political peril. Since then, federal policies to promote maximum production of the commodity crops from which most of supermarket foods are derived have succeeded impressively in keeping prices low and food more or less

off the national political agenda. But with a suddenness that has taken people by surprise, the era of cheap and abundant food appears to be drawing to a close. Moreover, the next president will need not to address food prices but to make the reform of the entire food system one of the highest priorities of his administration. Here, Pollan explains what the next president can and should do to remake the way people grow and eat their food.

### 7. Martenson, Chris EXPONENTIAL MONEY IN A FINITE WORLD

(PART I) (Vermont Commons, No. 25, Fall 2008)

Mann discusses state legislators' use of blogs as a method of communication for their constituents. While some representatives get a lot of coverage in traditional media, others who are closer to metropolitan centers have a more difficult time getting exposure. Blogs provide an easy and cheap means of publicity and a new way for constituents to meet their elected officials. Blogs are also helping to create transparency in government;

state legislators enjoy the opportunity to engage directly with constituents and let them know what is going on in the state capitol as it is happening. Research has shown that those who are involved in the online community are often civically engaged offline. While this is a relatively new technology, Dr. David Wyld, author of "The Blogging Revolution: Government in the Age of Web 2.0," says that this will be a feature constituents will come to expect from their elected officials in five to ten years.

## GLOBAL ISSUES

### 8. Boyd, E.B. TOMORROWLAND: AN ECO-SMART DESIGN COMPETITION TURNS "WHAT IFS" INTO "WHAT IS" (Utne Reader, vol. 149, September/October 2008, pp. 38-41)

The non-profit "Conscious

Choice" sponsored a design competitions for forward-thinking ideas in the energy, transportation, commerce, community and "city block" categories. 70% of the competition entries came from students

and included playgrounds which convert "kid power" into electricity for LED lights, a farm park which allows commuters to buy local food as they connect to public transportation, green building, and recyclable

housing. The competition's goal is to inspire real-world designers to think about new ways to make city life healthier and more sustainable.

## Continue...

9. Jackson, Nancy Mann STATE OF BLOGGING (State Legislatures, Vol. 34, No. 5, May 2008, pp. 30-32)

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are closer to metropolitan centers have a more difficult time getting exposure. Blogs provide an easy and cheap means of publicity and a new way for constituents to meet their elected officials. Blogs are also helping to create transparency in government; state legislators enjoy the opportunity to engage directly with constituents and let

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## INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

10. A FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET FOR THE FUTURE: FIXING THE CRISIS IN DIPLOMATIC READINESS (American Academy of Diplomacy and the Henry L. Stimson Center, October 2008, 75 pp.)

This report, a collaborative effort of 48 retired ambassadors and other foreign affairs experts, concludes that the U.S. faces critical foreign challenges with inadequate staff and resources as well as "authority shortfalls" relating to some economic and security assistance programs.

The study reviews four categories of activity: core diplomacy, public diplomacy, economic assistance, and reconstruction/stabilization. It devotes 13 pages to public diplomacy activities, which it limits narrowly to exchanges, international information programs,

and field operations carried out by the Department of State. For these activities, the report recommends increasing U.S. direct-hire staff by 487, locally employed staff by 369, and overall staff and program funding increases totaling \$610.4 million by Fiscal Year 2014.

## U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

11. Barber, Peggy; Wallace, Linda LIBRARIES CONNECT COMMUNITIES (American Libraries, vol. 39, no. 9, October 2008, pp. 52-55)

The authors, cofounders of the Chicago-based consulting firm Library Communication Strategies, produce the Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study, which provides data and insights to help libraries and library staff strengthen their advocacy efforts and market themselves more effectively. Even before the latest economic downturn, most directors anticipated flat or declining revenues due to growing resistance to taxes and government budget deficits. The authors confirm that many libraries are increasingly turning to grants, fundraising, and gifts to supplement public financing. Not surpris-

ingly, people at libraries with newer computers expressed a high level of satisfaction with their experience – but so did users at less well-equipped libraries. People in poorer communities focused more on economics ("It's important for people like me who can't afford computers"), while users in more affluent areas talked more about education and research ("Computers are more important than books today") and the library as a quiet, convenient place to go ("Some of us don't want computers at home"). From 1996-2000, the number of libraries offering public-access computing went from 28 to 95 percent.

12. Chapin, Mac THE MEANING OF COLUMBUS DAY (World Watch, vol. 21, no. 6, November/December 2008, pp. 8-17)

The author, an anthropologist and director of the Washington, D.C.-area Center for the Support of Native Lands, notes that the "discovery" of the Western Hemisphere by Columbus in 1492 was the first step in a process that led to the conquest and European subjugation of the native peoples of this newly-found continent. It determined the direction the Americas were to take from that point on, notes Chapin, and much of what really happened has in the past been ignored or glossed over in the mainstream culture, from Columbus Day celebrations to history textbooks in the school system. The primary effect on the native population after the arrival of Europeans was the drastic population declines as a result of epidemics of diseases for which the natives had no immunity. It is generally accepted that 50-80

million people were living in the Americas in 1492, and that shortly after this time they suffered a demographic collapse, which radiated throughout the hemisphere, hitting hardest in the tropical lowlands and areas of dense settlement. Few regions escaped its reach, including remote corners where Europeans had never set foot.

### DID YOU KNOW?



National American Indian Heritage Month pays tribute to the legacy of the American Indians and

Alaska Natives – the first Americans – and celebrates their enduring contributions to the history and culture of the United States.

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1. ( ) BARACK OBAMA'S VICTORY SPEECH
2. ( ) JOHN MC CAIN'S CONCESSION SPEECH
3. ( ) ROAD TO THE WHITE HOUSE: BARACK OBAMA
4. ( ) HIGH MARKS FOR THE CAMPAIGN, HIGH BAR FOR OBAMA
5. ( ) YOUNG VOTERS COUNT
6. ( ) THE FOOD ISSUE: FARMER IN CHIEF
7. ( ) EXPONENTIAL MONEY IN A FINITE WORLD (PART I)
8. ( ) TOMORROWLAND
9. ( ) STATE OF BLOGGING
10. ( ) A FOREIGN AFFAIRS BUDGET FOR THE FUTURE
11. ( ) LIBRARIES CONNECT COMMUNITIES
12. ( ) THE MEANING OF COLUMBUS DAY

### Special Offers:

- ( ) Barack Obama: 44th President of the United States

### Thanksgiving Day (fourth Thursday in November)



A variant of the harvest festivals celebrated in many parts of the world, Thanksgiving is popularly traced to a 1621 feast enjoyed by the English Pilgrims who founded the Plymouth Colony (located in present day Massachusetts) and members of the Wampanoag Native American tribe. Over the years that followed, state and federal governments declared numerous days of

Thanksgiving to mark important public events. In 1817, New York became the first state to declare an annual Thanksgiving Day. In 1863, during the long and bloody civil war, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November "a day of Thanksgiving and Praise." Congress made Thanksgiving a legal federal holiday in 1941 and moved the holiday from the last Thursday in November to the fourth Thursday, in hopes of stimulating the economy by lengthening (in some years) the Christmas shopping season. The holiday is typically celebrated at home and remains the occasion for a large and festive meal, and for expressing thanks for that bounty.